

**CONFIDENTIAL**

### Regional Analysis of Northeast Thailand

The proposed project would be in the form of a regional analysis of Northeast Thailand. This is a strategic area which would become vitally important should Laos be lost to the Communists.

The proposed study would have three objectives, (1) In view of the lack of English-language basic information on the area, one objective will be to make the study sufficiently comprehensive to serve as a source of information on basic physical and cultural geographic factors which would have to be considered should an emergency occur in the area (2) a second objective will be to identify and analyze, through a study of these factors, any aspects of this region which affect its vulnerability to Communist conquest. A superficial knowledge of the area would identify it as a generally economically depressed region, and consequently, even the casual observer would expect that its poverty-stricken populace would be susceptible to the lures of Communism. However, more intensive study would indicate other less obvious spheres of vulnerability such as the affinity of the approximately 50,000 Annamese in Northeast Thailand for Communist North Vietnam. (3) Finally, as a third objective, every effort will be made to include and point up the significance of information which will have especial utility for intelligence operations.

The development and organization of the study will be shaped to meet these objectives. It will consist of three main sections: the physical environment, the cultural environment, and a section encompassing conclusions based on the first two sections. The section on physical environment will consist of more than an exposition of factors in its traditionally

**CONFIDENTIAL**

CONFIDENTIAL

Approved For Release 1999/09/26 : CIA-RDP79-01009A002300020002-3

accepted components-- i.e., terrain, climate, drainage, vegetation, fauna --

which are pertinent to the scope of the study. For example, in the treatment of terrain, factors such as suitability for potential emergency landing sites, cover potential, and traversability of the terrain by foot will be pointed up.

The section on cultural environment will include information relevant to the peoples of the region as well as information on transportation and communications. Emphasis will be placed on giving a detailed description of the living habits, religious beliefs and taboos, and prejudices of each ethnic group found in the area.

Conclusions developed from analysis of the information in the first two sections will be summarized in a third section. Necessary pictures and maps will be included.

Presently, it is planned to consider Northeast Thailand as a single region and to develop the study from a systematic geographic approach. However, it is entirely possible that, as research proceeds, it will be more feasible to develop several sub-regions, perhaps on an ethnological basis, which may make the study more useful. Therefore, this present proposal should be considered tentative and open to alteration in form.

- 2 -

CONFIDENTIAL

Approved For Release 1999/09/26 : CIA-RDP79-01009A002300020002-3